

# THE READING TEACHER

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## STANDARDIZED READING TESTS -- THEIR USES AND ABUSES

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A standardized reading test is one which has been developed by a person who is, presumably, expert both in the field of reading and in the techniques of test construction. The test maker should understand what abilities are important in the reading program, and what techniques are most useful for testing that ability. The test maker selects the items for the test and the testing procedure--the directions to be given to the pupils, the testing time, and way to score the results, etc.--and then tries them out on a representative sampling of pupils. He will then revise the test and repeat the whole procedure until he is satisfied that the test is valid and useful.

The next step consists in having the test given by many different examiners, in many different schools, selected for the purpose of providing a representative population, or, in certain cases, another type of population exactly defined. The results of these tests, when scored and tabulated, provide the basis for the test "norms." The norm should provide an intelligible standard of comparison.

Properly to use such a test with an individual child or class, the teacher must follow the standardized procedures exactly. He should give the same directions, no more and no less; provide exactly the same time; score the papers in exactly the same way; and compare them by precisely the same procedures with the standards or norms. Any deviation from the standard procedure will result in misleading data.

### *Why Use a Standardized Test?*

The major advantage of the standardized test, in comparison with an informal observation or

test, is that it enables the teacher to secure the following information more accurately.

1. She can know with relative exactness what ability each reading test measures. The typical modern reading test consists of a battery of several reading tests, each of which measures some specialized ability.

2. The teacher is enabled to compare with high reliability the ability of any pupil or any group with the norm--that is, with the average performance of a large population tested with the same instrument in the same way.

3. The teacher can compare each child in her own class with every other child in her class, with a relatively high level of accuracy.

4. The teacher can compare each child's attainment in each ability in the battery with all the other test abilities in the same battery.

The teacher can compare the pupil's status in each of the abilities tested with her own appraisal of these abilities obtained from her observation or informal tests.

### *Care in Using Standardized Tests*

A matter of first importance is to realize that each single test in a battery measures not all phases of reading ability but a specialized type of ability. For example, one may find in several different published tests or test batteries, one or more individual tests labeled "Speed of Reading Test." Even these tests prob-

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### PLANS FOR 1952-53

Looking ahead to the 1952-53 year the Triennial Assembly has made plans for:

1. Reorganization of *The Reading Teacher*
  2. Adoption of additional Local Councils
  3. Expansion of services to Local Councils
  4. Establishment of Life Memberships
- (See pages 16, 17 and 18 for details)

## STANDARDIZED READING TESTS

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ably do not measure the same ability. For example, here is one test consisting of very short paragraphs all of about third-grade level of difficulty, all equally difficult, each followed by a comprehension question which can be answered correctly when the child has merely a good general idea of the content. In another battery the speed test consists of much more difficult material, organized in longer paragraphs, and coupled with much more searching comprehension exercises. These two tests do not measure the same abilities. One child may be much more proficient in the swift superficial reading sufficient for the first test than he is, relatively, in the more difficult and exacting reading required in the second. These two speed tests measure obviously different abilities from those diagnosed by a test consisting of a series of paragraphs of increasing difficulty. The latter measures depth of comprehension rather than speed.

It is of utmost importance that the teacher understand as fully as she can precisely what reading ability a standardized test measures.

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For more about reading tests, see Dr. George Prescott's warning "Use Tests Carefully -- They Can Be Dangerous Tools" (pp. 3-5). "The Case History of Charles" (pp. 6-7) shows how one teacher used test data to guide her.

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Even tests from different batteries bearing the same title may measure quite different abilities. Therefore, the teacher should not only study the test manual very carefully, but she should observe her children at work, know their comparative competences in different tests as a means of understanding more and more fully what a particular test measures. It does little good to get a test score, however reliable, unless the teacher knows what kind of ability it really represents.

Several practical cautions may be drawn from the fact that each test measures a specialized ability. For example, if a teacher measures speed of reading at the beginning of the year with a test from one battery and at the end of the year with a speed of reading test from another, the gain may not represent at all well the growth in any particular kind of speed of reading, or in an average of several kinds during the year. The gain would be much more reliably indicated by using at both

times different forms of the same test. Teachers have often been bewildered by the fact that certain pupils when measured, say, at the beginning of the third grade, have obtained much higher (or lower) scores in "Primary Reading Tests" than in "Grade 3 to 8 Reading Tests" given at the same time. The suspicion is often that one or both of these groups of tests is unreliable. The difference in age or grade scores is probably due to the fact that different abilities are measured by the two batteries of tests. A particular child or group of children may, in fact, be relatively more advanced in one than the other.

### *Interpreting the Test Scores*

In interpreting standardized tests the teacher should realize what sort of performance is called for. For example, if the directions are to "read the material as fast as you can," it is to be assumed that the test measures the highest level of reading that the pupil can attain. He might read considerably slower when reading by himself, in a free reading situation.

The significance of test norms is frequently misunderstood. The norm represents not an ideal achievement but merely an average or mediocre attainment. It reveals what the statistically average child in a large population does. Necessarily about half of the children in this large population fall at or below the norm score, and another half equal or exceed the norm score. If a class is composed of pupils of superior mentality coming from superior homes and with superior teaching equipment, they should be expected to exceed the norm on the average; whereas less privileged children should not be expected to equal the norm.

Teachers are often disturbed when they find that even though the class average equals the norm, a large number of pupils fall below it. This is, of course, mathematically necessary. The same thing was true in the population on which the norm was based. Obviously, if all the pupils in the class equalled or exceeded the norm, the average of the group would be very much higher than that of the standardized population.

It should be realized, furthermore, that at this particular time the exact significance of norms, that is, of an average or grade score, is not as clearly cut as it was a couple of decades ago. This is because there are probably now much greater variations in promotion policies than heretofore. If a teacher is compar-

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## USE READING TESTS CAREFULLY -- THEY CAN BE DANGEROUS TOOLS

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Reading is a highly complex process. There are numerous skills that need to be developed during the elementary school period. Desirable growth in the important reading skills will result only through a carefully planned program of instruction--a program adapted to different levels of ability and different rates of learning. Consequently, if reading instruction is, in any realistic sense, to meet the needs of individual pupils or groups of pupils, continuing and accurate information concerning their abilities and achievements is required.

The more information the school staff--administrators, supervisors, guidance personnel, and classroom teachers--have concerning the proficiency of their pupils with respect to these reading abilities, and the more they are guided by this information in selecting instructional materials, the greater is the likelihood that real progress will be made toward the attainment of their reading goals. Thus, continuous evaluation becomes an integral part of the teaching-learning process.

### *Uses of Standardized Reading Tests*

There are many kinds of information which the various members of the school staff should have if they are to be in a position to deal adequately with pupils. There are also many sources of information--a wide variety of techniques of evaluation, both "test" and "non-test."

Standardized reading tests represent one important source of information which serve administrative, supervisory, guidance, and classroom purposes. For example, the principal or superintendent may be concerned primarily with comparing the general reading status of the pupils in his school or system with the national norm. The supervisor may be concerned, at the moment, with an evaluation of instructional methods or materials. The guidance counselor may need accurate information concerning the reading achievement levels of the pupils whom he is counseling. The classroom teacher may need information to aid her in grouping pupils within a class for reading instruction; she may desire to determine what growth has taken place

during a school year; she may wish to identify those pupils who, for any number of reasons, are achieving significantly below their capacity to achieve.

These specific instances in no way represent a complete listing of the ways in which standardized test data may be used; they do point to the many ways in which test data serve all members of the school staff.

The most important uses of test data are made by the classroom teacher for pupil guidance and for the improvement of instruction. Her main reason for testing should be to obtain a better understanding of her pupils, individually and as a group, to the end that she may do a better job of teaching them. The real value in testing, then, lies in obtaining information which enables one to adopt a strategy that will provide better guidance and better teaching.

### *Misuses of Standardized Tests*

Used properly and interpreted wisely, standardized reading tests of one type or another can provide valuable information for pupil guidance. Misused, they can be a source of inestimable harm, not only to the pupil whom they should benefit primarily, but to teachers and entire schools as well. Misuses of tests can usually be traced to lack of understanding of the nature and purposes of standardized tests and failure to consider their limitations. Scissors may be employed with excellent results in cutting paper and cloth, but with little success as a screw driver in the repair of a watch, a purpose for which they were not intended.

A complete listing of the misuses of tests would indeed be lengthy. Only three will be cited here: the rating or evaluation of teacher efficiency solely on the basis of standardized test results; the use of achievement test results as the sole basis for promotion of pupils; and the making of major decisions about pupils on the basis of a single test score. All such practices reflect a host of misunderstandings, several of which are discussed below.

### *Areas of Misunderstanding*

The necessity for adhering to the prescribed testing conditions is regarded lightly by many. One of the outstanding features of a standardized reading test is that it provides "comparative" information; that is, it provides information for comparing the performance of pupils

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## USE READING TESTS CAREFULLY

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with that of certain reference populations. One of the basic assumptions made when we compare the test scores of pupils with the scores made by the reference population, i.e. with norms, is that the test was administered in exactly the same way that it was to the norm group--with the same directions, time limits, scoring rules, etc. The teacher who fails to follow the instructions for administering and provides extra practice material, gives extra time to the slower pupils in her class, or scores the tests incorrectly cannot meaningfully compare the results made by her pupils with the norms for the test.

There is also considerable misunderstanding concerning the way norms are developed, and their relation to standards. Frequently, norms and standards are used synonymously. Norms are based on the *average* scores made by the pupils constituting the norm population. If the average score of a class on a reading test is at the norm, it is just an average class. Standards, on the other hand, are levels of proficiency set up locally as goals for pupils to attain. To consider attainment of the norm as evidence of satisfactory achievement or the goal to be attained by all pupils is, in most instances, unjustified.

Many teachers fail to recognize that a wide variety of factors, aside from specific in-school instruction, affect achievement test scores. This is particularly true in the case of reading to which out-of-school learnings contribute markedly. In other words, the score obtained by a pupil on a reading test reflects not only the effects of specific instruction, but his mental level, interest in and opportunities for reading, motivation, physical condition, previous schooling, and many other less discernible factors as well. Such factors need to be considered when interpreting reading test results.

One of the most potent of the factors affecting reading achievement is mental ability. An accurate estimate of each pupil's "potentialities for learning" is necessary for accurate identification of those needing special consideration. The teacher must be able to differentiate the poor readers with limited potentialities from poor readers who have average or superior mental ability because the corrective instruction will not be the same for both groups.

Moreover, the teacher should be cognizant of the fact that the pupil who is rather se-

verely handicapped in reading ability will almost surely be penalized if the mental ability test used presupposes normal reading ability for his age, and should be wary of accepting the score obtained from such a test as an accurate indication of the pupil's true mental ability level. Any pupil whose intelligence or reading test results seem greatly out of line in light of his past achievement record and/or the teacher's own estimates should most certainly be subjected to closer scrutiny.

That "a test is a test is a test" is a highly dangerous, though often made, assumption. Many teachers assume automatically that the test title accurately describes the test and, therefore, further inspection is unnecessary. It is safe to say that, of the hundreds of reading tests available to users, no two are identical with respect to purpose, skills measured, and results obtained. This fact is overlooked by the teacher who becomes disturbed and confused because her pupils do not receive identical grade or age equivalents on two or more "reading" tests. It is also overlooked by the teacher who assumes that the obtained reading test score is the properly weighted summation of *all* the important reading skills she is attempting to develop at the moment.

There is, undoubtedly, a wide variety of reading skills which ought to be developed systematically; however, so far as the writer is aware, agreement among reading authorities is far from unanimous as to the important specific skills to be developed, the varying degrees of complexity of each skill, or the exact grade levels at which each should be introduced or developed. Research has not yet given us exact information as to the interrelationships among the various skills, or the extent to which improvement in one skill results in improvement in another. As we find answers to such questions, better and different tests will be forthcoming.

### *Factors to be Considered in the Selection Of Standardized Reading Tests*

The purposes to be served by the testing should be the main criterion in the selection of tests. Reading tests are designed to serve, primarily, a single function; it may be a survey, or a diagnostic or analytic function. A survey reading test is designed to measure *general* achievement in, usually, a limited number of reading skills, whereas the function of a diagnostic test is to provide more *specific* information concerning the nature of a pupil's reading difficulties. Needless to say, each

type plays an important and unique role in the appraisal of reading ability. Because of the differences in function, no single reading test can be "all things to all people." In earlier days, a single remedy was advertised as a cure for a wide variety of ailments; by the same token, many test users, today, are searching for a single test which will serve, equally well, both survey and diagnostic functions.

The standardized silent reading tests available fall into three general categories: (1) tests of general reading comprehension and/or word meaning, and word recognition; (2) tests which measure a single reading skill; and (3) tests which provide separate measures of several reading skills. Tests of the first type usually provide an average reading score which is obtained by combining scores on the parts. Typical of these are the Nelson Silent Reading,<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan,<sup>2</sup> and Stanford Reading Tests.<sup>2</sup> Measures of single skills are confined almost entirely to word recognition tests such as the Manwiller Word Recognition Test,<sup>2</sup> and vocabulary tests. Among tests of the third type are the Iowa Silent Reading Tests,<sup>2</sup> Diagnostic Examination of Silent Reading Abilities,<sup>3</sup> and the SRA Reading Record.<sup>4</sup>

The best known of the few standardized oral reading tests available are the Standardized Oral Reading Paragraphs<sup>5</sup> and Standardized Oral Reading Check Tests<sup>5</sup> by William S. Gray. The former yields a composite score based on rate of reading and errors; the latter, scores for both rate and accuracy. The Gilmore Oral Reading Test,<sup>2</sup> soon to be published, provides measures of accuracy, rate, and comprehension. Aside from the comparative information obtained, such tests can be of value in determining the specific nature of a pupil's reading difficulties.

Too often the matter of test selection is not given the attention it deserves, with the result that important considerations are overlooked. Several of these in the form of questions are given below.

(1) *Will the test yield the information I need?* This is merely another way of saying, "Will the test serve my particular purposes?" As has been pointed out in an earlier section, this question cannot be answered merely by reference to the test title.

(2) *Will the test yield information that is*

*sufficiently dependable for my purposes?* This refers to the reliability, or consistency, of the test. The phrase, "for my particular purposes" in this question is significant. For example, if the test information is to be used for individual pupil guidance, a more reliable test is needed than if the data are to be used in studying the achievement of class groups.

If a test provides separate measures of several reading skills, it is necessary to study the reliability data given for each skill. Profiles are often misleading due to the unreliability of measures of the separate skills or abilities profiled. One of the greatest errors committed by inexperienced test users is the reluctance to consider a pupil's "obtained" test score as an approximation of his "true" score, thereby failing to make allowances for "errors of measurement."

(3) *Are the norms adequate?* Norms may be inadequate both with respect to representativeness and to type. If the test provides "national" norms, one should have evidence that they are truly representative of our nation's schools.

The test user should have knowledge of the types of norms--grade or age equivalents, percentiles, etc.--provided, since unavailability of norms of a particular type will limit the types of comparisons that can be made and the ways in which the data can be analyzed.

(4) *How many forms of the test are there?* If frequent testing with the same instrument is planned, it is normally desirable that more than one form be available.

(5) *Will the results be comparable from subtest to subtest, battery to battery, and form to form?* This is one of the most important requirements of a test if accurate comparisons between testings, among different groups, or among various subtest scores on the same test are to be made.

(6) *Does the test provide suggestions for the proper use and interpretation of the results?* Other factors which must be considered are the training required to properly administer and interpret the tests, the cost, and ease of scoring.

#### *In Summary*

The data from standardized reading tests represent one important source of information required by members of the school staff. With clear recognition of the particular uses and limitations of such tests, they provide valuable and unique information. Used indiscriminately and uncritically, they are not only ineffective, but dangerous tools. *The End.*

1 Published by Houghton Mifflin Company

2 Published by World Book Company

3 Published by Educational Test Bureau

4 Published by Science Research Associates

5 Published by Public School Publishing Company

## THE CASE HISTORY OF CHARLES

### A BOY WHO RESISTED READING

By Clara Gilbert Malcomson  
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Charles was the greatest challenge in my fourth grade. Although he had an intelligence quotient above average, he resisted reading. In fact, at the beginning of the school year he avoided books as much as possible. If everyone else was reading, Charles spent an excess of time browsing among books about the room. He finally carried one to his seat but soon hid it in his desk and indulged in dreaming or drawing.

I turned to his test scores and found that on the Binet Test his I.Q. was shown to be 112. These were the specific findings:

- Verbal abilities -- good
- Visual memory -- good
- Auditory memory -- very good
- Reasoning ability -- very good
- Discrimination -- fair
- Motor control -- good
- Self-confidence -- neither distrustful nor entirely self-reliant
- Social confidence -- rather shy
- Attention -- normal
- Findings in the Stanford Achievement tests at the end of Grade 3 showed:
  - Reading -- grade placement 2.0
  - Spelling -- no words spelled correctly
  - Arithmetic -- grade placement 2.3
  - "Discrimination -- fair" accounted for poor spelling and poor word recognition.

An Iowa State reading test in September registered a grade placement in reading of 1.4. This retrogression was probably caused by the fact that no reading was done during the summer vacations.

#### Personal Traits

Charles was nine in October of the year he entered fourth grade. He was a good looking boy with excellent posture and a shy, sweet smile. His hearing and vision were excellent. Although he was absent at intervals with colds, he had no history of disease except for measles and chickenpox.

In class Charles showed a keen sense of humor and acted quite mature. When an adult was speaking, he gave perfect attention, but he dawdled when working alone. His maturity of understanding so far exceeded his powers of

execution that he was often dissatisfied with his efforts and gave up easily.

The other children seemed to like Charles and accept him. He joined in group games indoors and out. He seemed to enjoy dramatic play as well as singing and rhythms but was shy about being conspicuous in either. He reveled in discussion or experiments in science and contributed in experience and materials. In social studies he was just as keen, far outstripping his classmates in general information which had been garnered in travel and stimulating conversation with his parents. Charles liked to go to gym, but he was the despair of the coach because of his soiled uniform, slow dressing, and slow response to directions given.

#### Two Books for Charles

I was sure there must be some way to interest such a boy in reading. I began by conversation trying to find out what his absorbing interests were. I soon found two--fire and boats. Fire because it was a forbidden indulgence, and boats because he had enjoyed his father's boat so much.

To further these interests I rounded up two little books about fire and boats. *The Fireboat*<sup>1</sup> about "John Harvey" in New York Harbor remained his favorite for weeks. At first we read the book together. I must confess I was doing most of the reading, but I didn't care how he learned to read it so long as he wanted to read and did. Through much repetitious reading, Charles soon memorized this little book and wanted to read nothing else. It was a proud occasion when he read the book aloud to his classmates.

#### We Tried Too Hard

The next book selected by Charles was *Fire*, *Fire*<sup>1</sup>, similar in format, language and illustration to his beloved *Fireboat*. He struggled happily with this book although he did not like to read it unless I was near at hand to help him. One day he told me he liked the book because it was not babyish.

Here I retrogressed in my reading sessions with Charles because I tried too hard to point out similarities in words, in initial sounds, in endings, or to point out the formation of

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<sup>1</sup> Published by E. M. Hale and Co., 1936



such a compound word as *firemen*. Charles was not interested. All he wanted was to find out what happened next.

So the story reading, mostly by me, was resumed. Later I wrote some of the key words on a paper for the boy to copy because his handwriting and spelling were poor. Charles was bored and did the job in a half-hearted way. But when it was suggested that he might draw pictures about the story, he was enthusiastic not only about drawing but also the labeling of his pictures. He did a whole picture over again because he was dissatisfied with the misspelling of one of the words in a label.

Soon I discovered that Charles had a large library of books at home, for he shared many with the class when they were needed most. Almost every time a new subject was broached in discussion--whether the stars, calendar, weather, animals, ahistorical fact, an industry, mining, forestry or whatnot--Charles came the next day with a good book about the subject. Sometimes he would be seen laboriously copying the title of a book right after its introduction to the class. Very soon thereafter he would proudly bring a copy of it to the class. No doubt he enjoyed the prestige of owning good books even though he could not read them, and his mother was doing all she could to foster his desire for them.

#### *A Visit from Charles' Mother*

Report time came. For Charles, good ratings were registered in many categories but not in reading. Charles looked at his card, mumbled, "All I deserve," smiled and walked out. Then Charles was absent for two weeks with a cold. During that time his mother came for a conference with me. She brought the signed report card, clean and intact but in a crumpled envelope which showed that the boy had trampled upon it in the mud. The trampling evidently released his anger, for he made no comment when he handed it to her. Wisely she and his father ignored it. We discussed the disparity between Charles' manifold interests in books and his ability to read them. The mother disclosed what she felt to be the difficulty. She was ill the first half of Charles' life and paid little attention to him. Then he balked when she tried to come back into his life and direct his activities. She felt he unconsciously blamed her for sending him to school where restrictions were made upon his time after he had been free of restrictions for so long. She carried the guilt complex that he had resisted reading as revenge against her and authority of adults. She felt she was winning him but knew that progress would be slow.

#### *A Change in Attitude*

As soon as Charles returned, I could see a great change in attitude. Ambition had been awakened in him by the new bond with his mother or by facing the facts shown on his report card. When his turn came to read with me, he asked eagerly, "Have you time to hear me read the whole book?" He was still reading the fire book. He read all of it with little stumbling. Then he said, "I'll read another fire book to you if you've got one." I was ready with *Binkie and the Firemen*.<sup>1</sup> I pointed out a few key words, and Charles took the book smilingly to his seat. Soon he was sharing its pictures with a neighbor and actually asking him for help with a word. Before long the two boys were reading together with a gracious giving of help by one and a gracious receiving of it by the other. Another milestone had been passed.

Gradually Charles increased his reading vocabulary by his desire to read notices and assignments on the blackboard, mimeographed words of songs on the screen in Music Assembly, and athletic notices at the gym entrance. He was growing daily in word independence.

After success with *Binkie and the Firemen*, he was given a longer but simpler book, *Boots the Fireman's Dog*.<sup>2</sup> Then followed discouragement and retrogression. The book was hidden in his desk most of the time. Each time he was asked to read, records showed that he had advanced only a page or two between readings. The story did not move fast enough to suit him. The primarized repetition of words irritated him. Halfway through he asked if he might read another book instead.

Four books were put before him, *The Big Fire*<sup>3</sup> by Elizabeth Olds, *The Busy Little Fire Engine*<sup>4</sup> by Edith Lowe and *Little Toot*<sup>5</sup> and *Hercules, The Story of an Old-Fashioned Fire Engine*<sup>6</sup> by Hardie Gramatky. *The Big Fire* attracted him, and he fingered its pages avidly. Then he closed the book, handed it to me and said, "Will you keep this for me until I can read it?"

He handled the other three and chose *The Busy Little Fire Engine*, perhaps because of its

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1 Published by E. M. Hale and Co., 1936.

2 Published by American Book Co.

3 Published by Houghton Mifflin Co., 1945.

4 Publisher not known.

5 Published by Putnam, 1939.

6 Published by Putnam, 1940.

## INTEREST IN ELECTRICITY HELPED ALBERT TO READ

By David L. Cline  
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My first teaching assignment included teaching physics in a consolidated rural school. Reading was considered part of elementary rather than secondary education and part of English rather than science.

Albert was in my first physics class. His handwriting was undecipherable, and his reading level indeterminate except that even the novice teacher that I was could readily assume that Albert never read the text because he could not. When this simple diagnosis was concurred in by his other teachers and keeping him awake in class became too irksome, I followed the lead of those other teachers and assigned him to a back seat. At least from that point his faint snoring would be less noticed by the other physics pupils.

Albert slept from the exertion of his morning chores about the farm, while the rest of the class struggled through mechanics of solids and fluids, heat, sound, and light. When we

started electricity, I was startled to find Albert's eyes wide open during our class discussion. Clearly he was interested in the subject of electricity.

I referred him to books in the school library with some misgivings since they were even more difficult than the text. Often he would copy abstruse phrases and passages in his own script (legible to him but to no one else) and haltingly read or spelled them to me for translation or explanation. This was done with rapidly developing insight into the more practical phases of electricity.

Two weeks before the end of the term, Albert asked me to go home with him -- he wanted my help with a problem. That afternoon I drove him home. From the overflow of a large duck pond he had constructed a sluiceway which rotated a five-foot undershot water wheel which was belted to two old Ford generators which in turn were wired to several automobile headlamps in the barn.

His problem? The headlamps gave only a dull reddish glow which Albert wanted to correct.

Several books and three months later, Albert had electric lights in his house as well as his barn. The following year Albert graduated, and he wrote me a letter in his own script which, though not beautiful, I could read.

## THE CASE HISTORY OF CHARLES

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brevity, for he remarked that the pictures were not very good. The subject matter held his attention because it was real and accurate. Several times he asked for help with words. One noon he asked permission to come in early and read the book to me. He came, and we had a good time reading and discussing the story. I asked him if he would like to introduce the book to the class. He smiled his pleasure and decided how much of the story he would tell. Charles talks very well. In the afternoon he presented the book, told a part of the story, and stopped at a point of suspense. When he asked, "Who would like to read this book?" there was a scramble. Charles grew a foot in academic stature.

### *Reading News Material*

One day came the request, "May I have a newspaper?" Copies of *Young America Reader* were available in the room and copies of *My Weekly*

*Reader* had been borrowed from another class. Never before had he shown a desire to find out news for himself. Thereafter when the class read and talked over the news items, he was an active participant. In addition he brought from home clippings cut from New York papers and took great interest in posting them on the bulletin board.

And so the progress continued. Animal books became very popular with him. By the end of the year he was pouring doggedly over reference books to help in science projects. Although he could not read them as well as many of his classmates, he was growing in his ability to gain needed information from the printed page. He wanted less and less help. It was gratifying to me to have him say, "Don't tell me. Let me think."

In May, Iowa tests showed Charles' grade placement was 4.2 in reading. This was a gain of over two years in reading comprehension and word recognition. But far overbalancing the academic gain were the social and emotional gains in leadership, self-confidence, and cooperation.

*The End.*



## CREATIVE LANGUAGE ACTIVITY PROMOTES THE DRIVE TO READ

By Jeannette Veatch  
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Kilpatrick pungently stated that a child learns what he lives to the extent that he lives it. Applied to the field of reading, this statement has particular significance. In the set-aside reading period--the formalized, work-type, get-out-your-reading-books period--opportunities to live learning are quite apt to be missing. This vacuum must somehow be filled, and teachers resort to what is known as motivation which means supplying a motive for whatever is to be done anyway.

Let us assume in the beginning that word recognition is not reading, and that naming a series of words or phrases is a totally different operation from reading those same words or phrases. Reading is basically simple. It is only the teaching of it that makes it difficult. Evidence is seen in the generations of children who have learned to read in spite of all the word development activities, the segregated groupings, and other ineffectual practices.

To many teachers, reading--not just word naming--has a disconcerting habit of occurring at the most unexpected times. Those times often are quite unplanned, as for example, when children see signs on a trip or receive a GI letter from Korea. In these situations the drive to read is so powerful that motives are not needed. Thus we can assume that reading operates best when no motivation is needed.

Motive is always present in the child. He needs only to be present in a situation that triggers it off. And to me one of the last places that this triggering off can occur is during the so-called reading period. True reading does not need motivated settings. True reading needs living situations in which reading is an integral part. Reading should not exist for itself alone, but be allowed to occur on a tremendously expanded scale in bona fide living situations.

To support the thesis that learning is inseparable from living, we can draw on an old adage about leading a horse to water. Although every teacher knows that the horse cannot be made to drink, too many forget the adage and assume a child can be made to learn.

There is abroad in our land an educational

philosophy which might be described as the "castor oil" philosophy. That is, the worse something tastes, the better it is for you. Teachers addicted to this philosophy make reading taste worse and worse by drilling harder and harder on less and less. Instead, if the printed symbols are tied closely to the child's being, to his private world, the more rapidly he notices their quality for helping him. When this noticing occurs, he begins to use symbols in the sense of their prime design, namely, to communicate with others.

While it is true that today's children are better readers than those of twenty years ago, the top potential is still far off. Probably it will remain far off as long as teachers cling to formalized reading periods as good practice.

What then is to be done? What can be offered as a substitute, or at least a supplement, to the artificial reading period? There are, of course, limitless possibilities, the vast bulk of which properly lie in the domain of experiential and recreational reading. It seems to me that three areas of the language arts have been neglected. These are (1) spontaneous, structured discussion; (2) creative writing, and (3) creative dramatics. All are loaded with reading opportunities that are vital to a reading program. Let us see their relationship to our problem.

Spontaneous discussion, creative writing, and creative dramatics include reading as an integral part of the activity. Further they give meaning and sense to the things that are read. In no way do they force a child to learn. Rather they use his innate motives for learning. These activities help a child to make sense out of his school world, and they tie his self-image to school processes in a tight knot that forever insures his fascination with the world's store of knowledge. These activities help him to decide which part of the world's store of knowledge he is going to select for his own exploration.

### *Spontaneous Discussion and Reading*

Just how can discussion, for example, make as great a contribution to reading as a formalized reading period? The key to this whole matter lies in the voluntary aspect of talking together. When children choose to talk they must choose something to talk about, and the mere fact of that choice guarantees an interest in that subject. And when interest is aroused, further hunting for information on that subject follows. Now the teacher's job is

*Continued on page 10*

## CREATIVE LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

*Continued from page 9*

to keep up with the demand. Reading is in demand so motivation is unnecessary.

It might be well to digress briefly at this point on some of the key factors which must prevail if discussion is to be vitalized.

Thousands of college professors employ the same type of structure used by most good nursery school teachers. This is the structure in which the teacher (or leader) is the focal point. All lines of communication drawn from talkers to listeners pass through the teacher. This teacher can enable the children to progress past the dependence on her central presence if she talks less than each child who speaks, if she resists temptations to cluck or praise, if she asks questions that require more than yes or no, if she allows genuine give and take, and if she refuses to designate the areas of discussion (with the exception maybe of the kick-off idea).

The ultimate progression is that structure in which the teacher is dispensable as the leader and is superseded by a chairman without her status or by no chairman at all. In this type of structure the talkers must volunteer, and the areas for discussion are those brought out spontaneously by the group. It is this factor of choice which guarantees that the children get on what one sixth grader called a "hot subject." And it is the heated discussion that carries learning out of the school, into the home, into the library, into the community.

The excitement of an intellectual exchange of ideas produces the drives for knowledge. Those who worry about reading rates and levels can perform near miracles by promoting such spontaneous discussion.

### *Creative Writing and the Reading Program*

Now let us examine the ways in which creative writing contributes to a reading program. The setting is again of a voluntary nature even though a total group may be participating. It is voluntary in the sense that each child writes only when he is smitten with an irresistible idea. The artistry of the teacher can help in finding the irresistible idea, but the ultimate choice lies with the child. The teacher can do all within her power to incite to write, but should she use fear, pressure, and coercion, she will effectively block expression.

Creative writing is that writing which takes place when the child has a good idea for

a story, poem, etc. When he can have an adventure on paper, he has a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. And he wants to repeat that good feeling.

Interestingly enough, the urges and drives to communicate are fostered and developed when the child is guaranteed the right of privacy of his product. In other words, a child will write more eagerly, and more copiously when he is the one who decides who is going to see it. And the teacher who promises this right of eminent domain and then welshes on her promise, stops the drive to write no more to be moved.

When trying this activity for the first time, most teachers are shocked at children's lack of proficiency in the mechanics of writing. It is a temptation to correct or mark or grade or check the children's stories but such an urge must be resisted. Proficiency in the mechanics of writing is indeed the bed rock of writing ability and must be faced in all of its seriousness. But if the castor oil philosophy comes into play, the drive to write will be destroyed. It is at this point the teacher must grit her teeth and skip the mechanical faults and hunt for those inimitable, child-like threads of ideas that are luscious in their quality of thought. If she can find them, and they are always present if the writing is spontaneous, she will preserve the drive to write. If she can maintain that for several sessions or until the danger point of loss of eagerness is past, she can then work on mechanics. But the wonderful thing is that a miraculous improvement usually occurs, and the mundane mechanical job is greatly simplified, and can be handled incidentally.

A child cannot participate in this kind of writing without wanting to read it. These words he has written are very real to him. It makes sense to read this, and he wants to do it. Talking, reading and writing become a whole. No longer does the child face these communicative activities as disconnected, unrelated items. The pieces of his school life begin to fall into place. The need to talk, the need to write, the need to read assume comforting similarity. They help promote better communication. Reading comes into its own, because of its relationship to the other areas of language arts.

### *Creative Dramatics and the Reading Program*

Creative dramatics are those in which the play or story is developed spontaneously without memorization of lines. This spontaneous eruption of plot plus a constant shifting of

volunteer casts gives creative dramatics its ability to promote communication. There is a framework within which the action must take place, but it allows for much variation.

For instance, Little Red Riding Hood takes a basket to her grandmother. But the story doesn't tell where she leaves from, how she leaves, or who is present when she leaves. In creative dramatics the child must develop his own unique interpretation.

In such reenactments, different children will portray different kinds of wolves. When a child sees he can be a still different wolf, a flood of well-being comes over him. When he feels good about contributing, he wants to repeat that satisfaction. He seeks other ways in which he can exhibit his uniqueness to his fellows. He wants more stories. He drives himself to communicate more completely to others. He develops assurance before an audience. He becomes creative on his feet. Further he has a new-found drive for communicating, and that includes reading. Every basal text, no matter how old-fashioned or traditional has stories in it. Stories can be read haltingly and fumblingly, even when nicely chopped up in page by page units. But when they are unfrozen into spontaneous, unrehearsed dramatics, they come alive. The child whose interests have long been dulled in the daily formalized reading periods can be aroused to live again. And in this case to live means to seek from the world of books all of the treasures inherent therein. Thus dramatics become an integral part of the reading program and cannot be omitted.

#### *In Summary*

Let me refer again to the opening statement. Learning is not learned unless it is lived. It is learned only to the degree to which it is lived. Living connotes an emotional involvement. It is upon this emotional involvement that I am placing my faith in spontaneous discussion, creative writing, and creative dramatics. The trouble with most in-school activities is the absence of emotional involvement. Children are bored to an extreme. A teacher has only to note the light in the eyes of her cherubs when a party is suggested, if she doubts my statement on boredom. I have seen such light in the eyes of my children occurring at the suggestion of discussion, writing, or dramatics. When the key factors which have been described are present, the reaction is as hearty as that for any festivity.

Perhaps the reader is wondering at this point if all formalized reading periods should be dispensed with. I would say no, not entirely. I would eliminate about 90 per cent of them. I would have no more than one a week. I think that the time spent in formalized reading periods could be far more profitably spent in more valid activities to promote the drives to read.

The underlying factor in all reading activities must be that in which the child has the ultimate choice of participation. The teacher has a definite role, not of motivating, but of helping a child to find his deep motives that are omnipresent. The child seeks help from the artistic teacher while the coercive teacher must drive, pressure, and cajole. Excitement, fascination with knowledge, fascination with the products of one's own thinking especially if it surprises your own self are the basic drives in education. With this interpretation I must repeat my earlier statement. Spontaneous discussion, creative writing, and creative dramatics are so loaded with reading opportunities, that it is shortsighted to conceive of a reading program without them.

*The End*

#### HOW CAN WE MEET THE ATTACKS?

In the current attacks on public education, reading is frequently the under dog. Almost every attacker has something derogatory to say about the way reading is being taught.

How can we meet such an attack? A plan of action is outlined by William S. Gray in his article "What Is the Evidence Concerning Reading?" in the January, 1952, issue of *Progressive Education*. The article is a significant part of this special issue which is devoted entirely to the subject "Meeting the Attacks on Education."

According to Dr. Gray we meet at least three challenging responsibilities: (1) to develop carefully planned reading programs that are supported by the results of both experience and experiments; (2) to make continuous studies of the progress of children and correct deficiencies found; and (3) to set up a program of public relations to acquaint parents with the reading program.

In a thorough and convincing manner Dr. Gray goes on to answer the questions so frequently asked: Has reading been neglected? Do pupils read less well than formerly? Are present standards high enough?



## CHILDREN'S SUMMER READING

### SHOULD BE PLANNED NOW

By Nova Nestrick  
Reading Editor  
The Macmillan Company

The summer vacation period for children of school age poses a problem for children, their parents, and their teachers. At this time of year children's vacation plans are usually indefinite. Will they go to camp, visit relatives, accompany their families to vacation spots in the mountains or at the seashore, or will they spend the summer at home? In early spring, the vacation period seems a long way off to children. Yet their conversations begin to reflect their thoughts about how they would like to spend this period of the year. Some look forward to their vacation with enthusiasm, some with misgivings. However, most look forward to it as a welcome change in their normal activities or routines of the school year.

Teachers can do much to make the summer vacation period a happy, carefree, and rewarding time. That is what all children need and to which they are entitled. The school program provided during the year may have developed interests that will carry over during the summer months. Yet one would be optimistic indeed, if he believed that this will necessarily happen without some direction on the part of the teacher and parents.

Teachers should begin now to include time in their classroom schedule for children to discuss their plans for the summer. Through these discussions children can be helped to look forward to a pleasant and profitable use of their leisure time. Such discussions also offer an opportunity for the teacher to become better acquainted with the vacation needs and interests of individual children. This information is essential if specific help is to be given to children in formulating their plans.

Whatever plans are made with and for children, summer reading undoubtedly will be given consideration. Some children will be interested in spending a great deal of time with books. The main problem for these children is to have an easily accessible source for reading materials. The chances are that most of these children have little academic need for a reading program as such during the summer. All they require is the opportunity to read.

Children who are or appear to be retarded in their reading skills present quite a dif-

ferent problem. Some of these children, because of their emotional and physical characteristics should be entirely freed from formal reading activities during the summer months. For others, the opposite may be true: formal reading activities dictated by their special interests and needs may be very satisfying and constructive.

What books and what activities will you recommend for individual children? Suggestions will vary from child to child. Help in making these suggestions may come from records you have kept during the school year. These will reveal each child's progress not only in reading but in all phases of his development--physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. Other valuable information will come from day-by-day living with children, conferences with parents, the school nurse, the psychologist, and the children's former teachers.

#### *School Help in Vacation Planning*

The types of activities in which the child can be expected to engage will be dictated by his interests, his needs, and where he will spend his summer. Many activities depend upon the extent to which the school accepts responsibility for the summer vacation activities of children and the extent to which parents accept their responsibilities.

The school can make a contribution toward satisfying summer reading interests of children by providing library services throughout the summer. In some communities arrangements are made for the school library to be open on certain days. A teacher is employed for this purpose or a volunteer committee of parents is in charge so that children can withdraw and return books as needed.

A continuing interest in reading might be stimulated if, in conjunction with the library service, a story hour and short interesting movies were provided. If it is impossible for the school building to be open, arrangements might be made with the public library to provide such a service. In this case the school library might lend books to the public library for the vacation period in order to supplement the latter's collection.

Teachers can guide individual children in compiling a list of books which they might be interested in reading or in browsing through during the summer. Such a list should be geared to the interest and reading ability of the individual child and made available to his parents for their information.

### Conferences with Parents

Some teachers plan a vacation conference with parents--either as a group or individually. At this time specific suggestions can be made for stimulating vacation reading. These might include: (1) providing a definite time during the week when parents and children read at the same time or read to each other, (2) providing attractive and interesting books in places where they cannot be overlooked and (3) discussing with children the humorous parts of stories read. Parents who have children in camp or away from home might be encouraged to send new books to their children instead of the usual sweets.

Children and parents who are planning a motor trip may choose books and maps to read about the places of interest which they will visit. Afterwards books, magazines, and bulletins related to the trip may have a new appeal for the children.

Many other summer experiences, some of which are non-reading in character, can help children develop a background of information which will make a direct contribution to their later growth in reading ability. The teacher and children may make a descriptive list of interesting places in the community which would be enjoyable and educational for children to visit. To be most helpful to children and their parents, the list should contain pertinent information and detailed directions. For example, if the local zoo is listed, give the location, directions for reaching it, the days and hours it is open to the public, price of admission, etc.

Various types of excursions into the community should be listed. Among these might be: a trip to see the harvest of fruit, vegetables, or grain; a visit to a poultry farm; a leisurely stroll in the park or in the woods; the inspection of a building, road, bridge, or boat under construction; a trip to a fish hatchery; a visit to a fruit or vegetable cannery; a trip to boat docks; picnicing and overnight camping; trips to art galleries, museums, and historical landmarks. The teacher should discuss with parents the value of such trips and help them formulate plans through which several parents would share responsibility for taking small groups of children to points of interest.

### Hobbies for Summer Fun

Children's interest in collecting should be encouraged during the summer. Through such a hobby they gain much information and also can learn to classify the items collected. Quite

often making a collection stimulates children to use the encyclopedia and to go ahead with special reading.

For those children who like to work with their hands, puppetry may provide many happy hours of entertainment. They can make their own puppets, puppet theatre, and develop their own dialogue for the various characters. Small groups of children working on puppets may be inspired to present a puppet show for children in the neighborhood, gearing the script to the age level of their audience.

It must be emphasized that the summer vacation should be a change from the type of activity in which children normally engage during the school year. It should be also a period which children enjoy. If wisely adapted the activities suggested here may meet these objectives and in addition provide a challenging and profitable summer for children.

*The End.*

### NEWS FROM THE TORONTO COUNCIL

From the 800-member Toronto and District Council of the I.C.I.R.I. comes news of a full and busy program. At the fall meeting of the Council, the theme was "Teaching and Testing Problems." Out of this meeting came the expressed need for suitable seatwork assignments according to an article in the February, 1952, *Canadian Teacher*.

On March 10 the Council sponsored a number of demonstration lessons in reading given in local schools of Toronto. The theme of these demonstrations was "Reading for Information." In preparation for these demonstrations, the Council prepared a series of "guidance sheets for demonstrators" and an "observer's page" to be used in the discussion.

In addition, each observer was given a copy of the lesson plan used by the teacher demonstrating. One lesson plan shows a rather rigid three-group set-up (The Cardinals, The Orioles and Kingfishers, and the Bluejays) each with specific assignments from basal readers of different grade levels. It also includes seat work assignments for the "development of work-type reading skills."

Interest in grouping seems to be high in the Toronto Council. In a "Study Pamphlet in Canadian Education" Margaret A. Robinson, Council President, explains one experiment in a three-group organization as it deals with a developmental reading program.

## STANDARDIZED READING TESTS

*Continued from page 2*

ing her group with a third grade norm, she should know whether and in what way the promotion policy for her group differs from the average for the country at large.

Teachers should realize, furthermore, that, strive as test makers will, it is utterly impossible to get norms on different batteries of tests which are absolutely equivalent. Even if one test maker gives his test to 100,000 pupils, it is practically impossible to get exactly the same sampling of children in our country as would another tester using an equally large population. This means that a third grade score of 3.5 on the test in one published series is unlikely to represent exactly the same ability as the grade score of 3.5 on another. In other words, the comparison of tests in one battery with those in another is typically much less reliable than the comparison of the tests within the same battery. This means that, for example, growth in reading ability occurring during a school year can be obtained more accurately by using the same tests from the same battery than by employing tests of two different series for the year-beginning and the year-end testing.

All tests have a limited and not a perfect reliability. The score on any test will, on the average, not be an absolutely perfect measure of the pupil's ability, but only an approximation to it. Usually test manuals give some idea of the amount of error, but few standardized tests of a particular reading ability are reliable enough to reveal accurately gains made during a short period of time, such as a month or even two months. It should be realized, furthermore, that the unreliability in a particular measurement springs in part from the way a pupil performs. He may function at a higher level one time than another. Most standardized tests will not measure the growth of an individual child reliably unless that growth is equal to that normally obtained in a half year or even more. If the teacher wants to get a more reliable measurement at a shorter interval, she must test at the beginning and the end of the period, with two or more forms, rather than a single one.

### *Reading Tests and the Daily Program*

Most of the considerations pointed out above and some additional ones lead the writer to the conclusion that the main value of stand-

ardized tests is not in the occasional formal all-school checkup made by a visiting examiner, but their use regularly as part of the daily teaching program.

The more thoroughly the teacher studies the manual, observes the children working with the tests, analyzes the results in comparison with observations of their daily performances and records obtained from informal tests, the greater will be the value of standardized tests. She should give tests when she feels there is a need, either to a particular individual or a subgroup or the whole group. She should attempt immediately to ascertain the meaning of the results and try to use them in daily teaching thereafter.

Some batteries of tests were designed primarily for the purpose of giving insight into the individual pupil's performance and of helping him to discover his own difficulties and needs.

The taking of standardized (and likewise informal tests) can and should be made an interesting and helpful part of every-day teaching and guidance. Shrewdly managed, the test can be divorced from the tense spirit of examination or inquisition and be made an exercise which children are eager to have. Some of the greatest values come when the teacher and the pupil voluntarily agree that it would be a good idea for the pupil to test himself.

The teacher can make this experience particularly fruitful if she explains what the test really measures, why it is important for the pupil to take it, and then after it has been scored for the teacher and pupil to sit down together to study the results, trying to figure out what they suggest in the way of future experience. To the extent that both the teacher and the pupil get some pointers from the study of the test results, to that extent pupils will be willing to pursue instructional activities designed to improve their ability and to look forward with zest to frequent checkup tests.

The standardized test should not be regarded as something necessarily different from, more informal than, or opposed to, informal tests. Although they are of course the best instruments to use for the occasional schoolwide, comparative checkup, they are, in many instances, the most valuable diagnostic device for the teacher herself to employ in daily work. They may be made the major means of enabling the teacher to devise more and much better informal tests and to use these two types conjointly to deepen her insight



into pupils' abilities, difficulties, and needs.

The more searchingly and thoroughly a teacher uses the standardized test, the more competent she should become in employing other forms of diagnosis. The more skillfully the teacher makes the pupil her partner in the use of the tests and finding the best ways of achieving his own growth and ability, the richer are the returns from all types of testing and appraisal.

The best time to give standardized tests to a whole class or to all the classes in the school is fairly soon after the beginning of the school year. Such a test enables the teacher quickly to size up her class as a whole and to determine roughly the relative abilities of her individual pupils.

The results are especially valuable in the case of pupils coming from other schools or from other classes in which few data are available concerning them. It is important that the test results be made available immediately so that they may be used in arranging subgroupings within the class, deciding upon the optimum level of reading materials, and planning teaching procedures for individuals. Since a standardized test thus given is not completely reliable and does not give information concerning all phases of reading ability, it should be merely the beginning of the continuous program of diagnostic observation and testing.

A similar group survey with standardized tests might profitably be given later in the year, but sufficiently early to give the teacher time to use the results to improve her instruction during the latter part of the year. Probably the least helpful time to give a standardized test is at the end of the year when it is too late for the teacher to do much for the pupils.

Some of the most valuable standardized tests are short diagnostic tests designed not to be given as group tests but as individual appraisals. Since many of these tests are included in rather extensive batteries designated as diagnostic tests for reading disabilities, many teachers mistakenly assume that these can be given only by a trained test examiner or reading specialist.

A typical battery of diagnostic tests would include individual examinations for such abilities as the following: word recognition; word pronunciation, with arrangements for clarifying different types of errors; vocabulary; ability to read by thought units; ability to interpret simple paragraphs; ability to use

context clues; knowledge of the sounds of letters and phonograms; skill in using prefixes and suffixes; ability to divide words into syllables; rate of reading of very simple or more complex material; reading of precise directions as compared with reading to get the main idea or reading to note specific details; ability to skim; and so on.

The average teacher can readily learn to give many of these tests and to use the norms which accompany them. To illustrate the value of using standardized tests in such a case, let us assume that a teacher notes near the end of the first year of school certain children who make reversal errors, that is, who mistake *was* for *saw*, *no* for *on*, etc. Some teachers who have heard about reversal errors may wonder whether these pupils have acquired some serious defect or deficiency.

The matter could be cleared up by giving one or more of three short tests in one of the diagnostic series. One of these tests requires the pupil to work out the pronunciation of a series of words among which are included a number of the *was-saw* type. The other is an oral reading test composed of passages which contain a number of the easily reversible words. After giving the test the teacher can compute the total number of errors and the percentage of this total which are of the reversible type. By looking up the norms accompanying the test she can find what percentage of reversal errors at the level of this child's general reading competence appears in the typical normal child and how high the percentage must be before she should regard the tendency as abnormally strong. The norms will show her that on these tests a certain percentage of reversal errors are made by the average child until he has reached approximately the fourth-grade reading level. Many teachers have worried quite unnecessarily about reversal errors when they are perfectly normal symptoms of average maturity. A good manual accompanying such tests, furthermore, will give the teacher pointers on how to deal with reversal tendencies when they are excessive. Thus in a few minutes the teacher, by using standardized diagnostic tests, can get a much clearer idea of the needs of her pupils and put into operation immediately corrective procedures.<sup>1</sup>

The End.

<sup>1</sup> Examples of diagnostic batteries: Durrell's *Analysis of Reading Difficulty*, World Book Company; Monroe's *Diagnostic Reading Examinations*, Stoelting; Gates' *Reading Diagnostic Tests*, Teachers College Bureau of Publications.

## EXTENSIVE PLANS FOR 1952-53 MADE BY ICIRI ASSEMBLY

### NEW OFFICERS ELECTED; NEW CONSTITUTION ADOPTED

Dr. Albert J. Harris was elected president of the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction at its annual Assembly on April 26th. Dr. Harris, Professor of Education and Director of the Psychology Clinic at Queens College, New York City, succeeds Dr. Gerald A. Yoakam of the University of Pittsburgh.

The ICIRI Assembly held its all-day business meeting at the Hotel Paramount in New York City. Action was taken to streamline the organization and to formulate plans for the year 1952-53.

Executive committee members who were present included Dr. Gerald A. Yoakam, out-going president; Dr. Albert J. Harris, in-coming president; Dr. Donald L. Cleland, Executive Secretary-Treasurer; Gertrude Williams, chairman of research; Mason Watson, chairman of the auditing committee; Dr. Emmett A. Betts, chairman of organization; and Nancy Larrick, chairman of publications.

Five local councils sent representatives. H. Alan Robinson represented Valley Stream, Long Island, New York; Dr. Cleland represented the Pittsburgh Council; Margaret A. Robinson and Marion Harvie represented the Toronto Council; Miss Williams represented the District of Columbia Council; and Mason Watson represented the Philadelphia Council.

#### *New Constitution Adopted*

Probably the most important business of the Assembly was the adoption of the new constitution which took effect immediately after the Assembly. The proposed constitution printed in the February, 1952, issue of *THE READING TEACHER* was adopted with only two corrections.

One was in the statement of purposes, Article II, Item 5, which originally read "To spread scientific information concerning reading instruction among all English-speaking peoples." In the final document the phrase "among all English-speaking peoples" was deleted because of growing interest in the organization expressed by educators in non-English-speaking countries and because of the large French-speaking membership in Canada.

The second change from the original proposal was to provide for Life Membership in the ICIRI with dues to be determined by the Board of

directors.

The new constitution, drawn up under the direction of Dr. Albert J. Harris, is simple and concise. It is believed that the efficiency of the entire organization will be greatly increased by the provisions of the new constitution.

#### *New Board Elected*

After adopting the new constitution, the Assembly went ahead to the election of officers and directors. The following officers were elected unanimously:

Dr. Albert J. Harris, President; Dr. Paul Witty of Northwestern University, President-Elect; Dr. Gerald A. Yoakam of the University of Pittsburgh, Past President; these officers will serve for the year 1952-53.

Four members were elected to the Board of Directors. Dr. Emmett A. Betts of Temple University and Miss Nancy Larrick of New York City were elected to serve for two years, 1952-54. Miss Margaret A. Robinson from the Toronto Council and H. Alan Robinson from the Valley Stream, Long Island, Council, were elected to serve for the year 1952-53.

Dr. Donald L. Cleland of the Reading Laboratory of the University of Pittsburgh was named to serve as Executive Secretary-Treasurer for the year 1952-53. Official headquarters will continue under his direction at the Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania.

#### *Life Membership Established*

By action of the group, dues for life membership in the ICIRI were set at \$50. It was felt that such membership not only provided a convenience to members who wanted to be relieved of the bother of annual dues but would give evidence of the confidence that individuals had in the organization and the support they were ready to give in its early stages.

Five members of the Assembly paid for Life Membership at once. They are Dr. Nila B. Smith, Director of the Reading Institute of New York University and President of the ICIRI in 1949-50; Dr. Gerald A. Yoakam, Director of the Reading Laboratory of the Uni-

versity of Pittsburgh and President of the ICIRI, 1950-52; Dr. Emmett A. Betts, Director of the Reading Clinic, Temple University, and one of the founders of the ICIRI; Mason Watson, Chairman of the Auditing Committee, 1949-52; Margaret A. Robinson, ICIRI Chairman for the Dominion of Canada and incoming member of the ICIRI Board of Directors.

#### *Report of Executive Secretary-Treasurer*

Dr. Cleland reported an active paid membership of 1400 representing 43 states, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Canada. Pennsylvania leads the other states with a paid membership of 349. Toronto leads all cities with a paid membership of 147.

The treasurer's report showed a balance of \$1187.20 and no outstanding bills. With the payment of life membership by five members of the Assembly, this balance was brought to \$1437.20.

Dr. Cleland reported that a number of groups have inquired about forming local councils of the ICIRI. Those most recently chartered are the Midwest City, Oklahoma, Council, and the Gerald A. Yoakam Council in Pittsburgh. Correspondence is underway with teachers in Ireland and England in an effort to set up councils in those two countries.

#### *Plans for The Reading Teacher*

*THE READING TEACHER* will be expanded to 48 pages and will appear in printed form beginning with the issue of September, 1952. This decision was made by the Board of Directors after careful consideration of membership and budget figures. It was felt that with a growing membership and with the present healthy financial condition of the organization, the change in format was not only highly desirable but a sound investment.

Dr. Cleland was authorized to get additional prices on paper and printing and on the advice of the president and editor to go ahead with the printing contract.

Miss Nancy Larrick was named to continue as Editor of *THE READING TEACHER* during the year 1952-53. Recommendations were made for Editorial Advisors to assist in planning the content of the five issues for the year and to suggest individuals who would be qualified to prepare articles for the magazine.

Board members agreed enthusiastically to continue this year's plan of having several articles in a single issue deal with one important topic in the field of reading instruction. These five main topics, to be dealt with in

the five issues for the year, are to be determined by the Editor in collaboration with the Editorial Advisors.

So that local councils can plan their meetings around these five main topics, the Board of Directors recommended that the list of topics be announced in the pamphlet being prepared for summer school distribution. The five issues of *THE READING TEACHER* will appear in September, November, January, March, and May.

After the Assembly adjourned, a meeting of the Board of Directors was held to discuss the new budget and to approve committee chairmen.

## NEWS OF SUMMER PROGRAMS

### *Camping and Reading*

A reading and test advisement clinic is announced as an important part of Skybird Camp to be operated this summer for boys and girls of five through 14. The camp is under the direction of E. J. Jan Tausch, director of guidance of the schools of Union, N.J.

### *Coordinated Conferences*

The Pennsylvania State College announces the fifth in a series of Coordinated Conferences in Education to be held on the college campus, June 23 to 27.

The purpose of the Coordinated Conferences is to bring together workers in the fields of art education, audio-visual education, language arts, psychology, special education, and speech education to share their interests and concerns.

## NEW BOOK ON READING

*Teaching Elementary Reading* is the title of a new book by Dr. Miles A. Tinker of the University of Minnesota. It was published on March 5th by Appleton-Century-Crofts of New York. (Price \$3.25). A review of this book will be carried in the September issue of *THE READING TEACHER*.

### WHAT DO YOU WANT

to see in *THE READING TEACHER* during the coming year? Please send in your suggestions for articles you would like to read, people to write those articles, and reading activities which others would like to hear about. Address your suggestions to the Editor, Nancy Larrick, 230 E. 48th St., New York 17.



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*For Information About Forming a Local Council of the ICIRI* write the Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Donald L. Cleland, (address above)

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*From the New President*

#### WHAT FUTURE FOR ICIRI?

The solid achievements of the presidency of Gerald A. Yoakam were dramatically evident at the meeting of the Assembly on April 26, 1952. During his administration ICIRI put its finances on a firm footing, adopted a streamlined democratic constitution, established a system of state chairmen, developed THE READING TEACHER into a highly respected magazine, and grew steadily. We are fortunate that as Past President Dr. Yoakam continues to serve as an officer.

In combining the offices of secretary and treasurer, we have made possible a great increase in office efficiency; and in Donald Cleland we have an Executive Secretary-Treasurer who has already demonstrated his fitness for the position.

Your new Board of Directors has formulated highly ambitious plans for the coming year. Of greatest importance is the decision to dignify THE READING TEACHER with a format worthy of its superior content. Starting with the September, 1952 issue, it will appear as a printed magazine with roughly twice as many pages as this year. Nancy Larrick as Editor will continue, with a distinguished advisory board, to produce issues of real practical value to classroom teachers. This great improvement will not require any increase in dues because of economies made possible by a larger membership.

Our great strength and hope for the future lies in the local councils. It takes only five interested people to form a new council. We hope to double the number of them this year, and to help those already active to become stronger and more effective. We want to improve communication between local councils and your officers, and to help each local council to become a vital force in its community's educational planning.

An organization like this needs many workers as active participants, committee members, etc. From today's volunteers will come tomorrow's leaders. Enlist your friends as members; take an active part in your local council; write to us and let us know how we can help you. As a young, vigorous organization we have an expanding future before us. Let's get to work!

ALBERT J. HARRIS  
President, ICIRI

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